

Tintic
War

Popular History of Utah

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thing growing. Added to that plague was a season of drouth. Then came the winter, one of the severest ever known in this region, burying the grazing lands under heavy snows, and causing the death of thousands of cattle, horses, and sheep.

Privation and Benevolence.—During the early months of the new year the people suffered much privation. Many were driven to the necessity of digging and eating roots—the sego and other wild growths, to eke out an existence until harvest time. Vast quantities of fish, taken with nets from Utah Lake, became food for the half famished people. All were not alike destitute. Some, foreseeing the straitness, had provided against it, and their bins and barns were full, while others were empty. Those who had, gave to those who had not; the full larders and storehouses being drawn upon to supply the needy and prevent suffering.*

The Tintic War.—To add to the general distress, some of the Indians became troublesome. A Ute chief named Tintie led the hostiles, inhabiting the valleys west of Utah Lake. They stole cattle from the herds, and killed two herdsmen, Henry Moran and Washington Carson. A posse of ten men with writs issued by Judge Drummond from the District Court at Provo, set out for Cedar Valley to arrest the murderers. They met with determined resistance, and an Indian named Battest was killed. In the general fight that followed, George Carson, one of the posse, received a mortal wound, while on the other side a squaw was killed and Chief Tintie wounded. A few days later the savages slew John Catlin, John Winn, and a Mr. Cousins, near Kimball's Creek, southwest of Utah Lake. They also captured and put to death a young man named Hunsaker. A force of cavalry under Colonel Conover was now ordered out by the Governor. Crossing the ice-covered lake, they pursued the Indians, who fled at their approach, leaving behind the stolen cattle. This ended the Tintic War.

The savages engaged in the strife were Utes, but were renegades from their tribe, for whose acts the main body was not responsible. The same may be said of a band of Yampa

*Among the most provident and the most benevolent were President Heber C. Kimball, of Salt Lake City, and John Neff, on Mill Creek. These men and others stood like so many Josephs in Egypt to the hungry multitude. They took no advantage of the straitened situation, by which they might have profited financially; but sold at moderate prices, where they did not give outright, their beef and breadstuffs, to those able to reimburse them. When flour commanded as high as a dollar a pound, they would not accept more than six cents, nor sell at all except to those in need, refusing to speculate out of the necessities of the poor.

Utes, who, in September of this year, broke up a settlement on Grand River.* The Utes as a whole respected the treaties that they had entered into. They had even made peace with their ancient foes, the Shoshones, through the influence of Governor Young and other leading citizens.

Death of Secretary Babbitt.—During this calamitous year, the Indians east of the Rocky Mountains attacked and robbed trains and killed travelers. Colonel Almon W. Babbitt, Secretary of Utah, was slain while returning from an official visit to the City of Washington. First, his train, loaded with Government property, was attacked and plundered by Cheyenne Indians, near Wood River (Nebraska); two of the four teamsters being killed, and another wounded. The savages also carried off a Mrs. Wilson, and slew her and her child. Colonel Babbitt was not with his train, but was killed by Cheyennes east of Fort Laramie, about the last of August.

The Margetts-Cowdy Massacre.—A few days later, another outrage by Indians of the same tribe occurred west of Fort Kearney. Thomas Margetts and wife, James Cowdy, wife and child, all from Salt Lake City, were crossing the plains on their way to England. They had a covered wagon, two mules and two riding horses. After leaving Fort Laramie they were joined by Henry Baichter, a discharged United States soldier, who traveled with them as far as the scene of the tragedy. On the sixth of September he and Mr. Margetts left camp to go hunting, and early in the afternoon they succeeded in killing a bison. A bluff was between them and the wagon, the latter a mile and a half away. Margetts took a portion of the meat to camp, and half an hour later Baichter, having secured more, followed. As soon as he saw the wagon he noticed that the cover was gone, and on approaching nearer beheld the bodies of Mr. Margetts, Mr. and Mrs. Cowdy and their child, lying on the ground. All were dead but the child, and it was wounded

*The Grand River settlement was about where the town of Moab now stands. The founders, forty men, were from Manti, and the colony was known as the Elk Mountain Mission. A little over three months after their arrival on Grand River, their fort was attacked by the Indians, who killed James W. Hunt, William Behunin, and Edward Edwards, and wounded Alfred N. Billings. Next day the survivors started back for Manti, arriving there six days later.

A similar experience awaited the Salmon River (Idaho) Mission, founded in June of the previous year by a company organized on Bear River, Utah, by Thomas S. Smith, and led by Francillo Durfee to its destination. In the midst of a savage country they founded Fort Limhi, which was maintained until 1858, when the colonists were driven out by hostile Indians.

A mission was also established at Las Vegas (Nevada) by a company under William Bringham, with George W. Bean as Indian interpreter.